

## Management

Weed control can be accomplished by mowing over the height of the tall dropseed plants or cultivating between the rows. For broadleaf weed control usage of 2 4-D can provide control and will encourage a good stand. For seed production, spray Sevin at seed development stage for grasshopper control. Use label recommendations for application. Burning of straw will invigorate the stand.

## Commercial Production

For a solid stand seeding, plant in the spring into a firm seedbed at a rate of 3.3 pounds PLS per acre. For optimum seed production, seeding rate of 40 PLS per linear foot of row in 30 inch rows, or at a spacing to accommodate available equipment. This rate is equal to 1.1 pound PLS per acre. Follow recommendation under establishment for seeding, stratification (cool dry for 60 days) and fertilization.

A well-managed stand with favorable growing conditions can produce seed in one year. Seed yields of 30 to 70 bulk pounds per acre have been obtained from non-irrigated stands. Shattering can be a problem along with grasshopper infestation. Field inspections are recommended periodically as planting reaches the seed production stage.

## Availability

Foundation seed of Iowa Germplasm Tall Dropseed has been allocated to Iowa seed growers by the USDA-NRCS.

## For More Information

Visit our Plant Materials Internet site at <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov> to find more information on solving conservation problems using plants.

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# Iowa Germplasm Tall Dropseed



Source Identified  
Conservation Plants  
Developed by the  
Elsberry Plant  
Materials Center,  
Elsberry, MO



North, Central and Southern Iowa Germplasm of Tall Dropseed, *Sporobolus asper*, Zones 2 and 3 were released in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Zone 1 will be released in year 2000.

Cooperating agencies in these releases were: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), University of Northern Iowa (UNI), Iowa-Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program (IRVMP), Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA).

The Iowa Germplasm of Tall Dropseed is recommended for use in plantings on roadside re-vegetation, critical areas, wildlife food and habitat, parks, and recreational areas, and prairie restoration. Each zone is recommended for planting within its zone of origin.

*Sporobolus asper* can provide hay and forage to all classes of livestock, however its forage rates only fair since palatability declines rapidly with seasonal maturity. It is an important part of prairie pastures, and is considered a long-lived perennial. Wildlife plantings should consider including dropseeds as the seed is a good food source for ground feeding birds.

### Description

North, Central and Southern Iowa Germplasm of Tall Dropseed, Zones 1, 2 and 3, are native warm-season perennial bunchgrasses that grow to a height of 2 to 4 feet. Tall dropseed produces seed heads 3 to 10 inches long in the fall. The stems and long leaves of this grass bleach white in winter. The upper leaf blades are short, the

basal blades are very long, tapering to a rolled tip and somewhat hairy at the base. Leaf sheaths are usually hairy at the throat and shorter than the internodes. Spikelets are one flowered. This grass is sometimes known as “flaggrass” because the top leaves open up and wave in the wind. This is most noticeable in the fall on cut over native meadows and on low conditioned ranges.

### Origin

North, Central and Southern Iowa Germplasm of Tall Dropseed Zones 1, 2 and 3 originate from locations in the North, Central and Southern counties of the state of Iowa, thereby making these accessions well adapted to these counties.



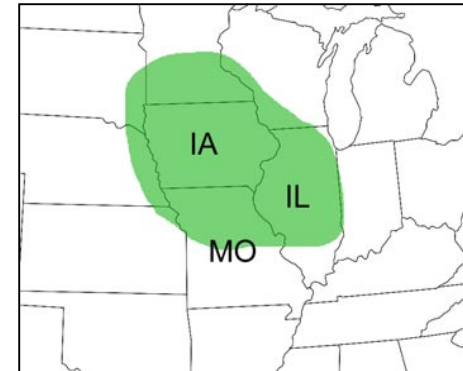
Grasses, An Identification Guide by Lauren Brown and An Illustrated Guide to Iowa Prairie Plants

### Adaptation

Tall dropseed grows on the plains and prairies throughout the United States except in the extreme west and southeastern areas. It is frequently found on sandy or rocky soils, on prairies, and on roadsides, most common in southeastern and south-central Iowa.

This bunchgrass is probably more common in the bluestem areas of the United States where it is considered to be an increaser. As the more palatable bluestem grasses are weakened by overgrazing, tall dropseed increases for a time until grazing pressure causes it to decrease.

### Recommended Area of Adaptation for Iowa Germplasm Tall Dropseed



### Establishment

Tall dropseed can be easily established by planting seed using a native grass drill. Plant seed in the spring into a firm seedbed at a depth of ¼ inch deep when the soil reaches 55-60° Fahrenheit. A fall dormant seeding can be made in late October through February. The number of seeds per pound averages 500,000. Seeding rates for tall dropseed should be 3.3 pounds PLS (pure live seed) per acre for drilling a solid stand. Use no fertilizer the establishment year unless soil test indicates a low deficiency of less than 15 PPM of phosphorus and or less than 90 PPM of potassium. Use no nitrogen during the establishment year as this can encourage weed competition.